(c) Information with regard to grounding or withdrawal of MIG variants by the East European Countries is not available.

(d) As new MIG-21 trainers aircraft are not available in the global market, being out of production, secondhand MIG-21 trainer aircraft were purchased in the past to meet the training requirements of the Indian Air Force.

Proposal to increase the strength of flighter squadrons

1580. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from the IAF about the necessity to increase the current strength of Flighter Squadrons;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The Indian Air Force has formulated a modernization plan to enhance its combat aircraft strength in terms of quality as well as quantity.

(b) and (c) All necessary steps are being taken to increase the combat ability of IAF.

Procurement of NBC protective gear

1581. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has signed an agreement to procure protective gear for nuclear, biological and chemical warfare from the Czech Republic;

(b) if so, what are the other items that are proposed to be procured from the Czech Republic; and

(c) by when the products would arrive and be used?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) As on now, no agreement has been signed with the Czech Republic for